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Tenth meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee of the Whole

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
27 March - 3 April 1989

Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Twenty-fourth session of the Commission/ fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
6-10 April 1989

Item 6 of the provisional agenda**

LC/NAIROBI

REPORT OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE JOINT INTERGOVERNMENTAL REGIONAL COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND ENVIRONMENT

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 13-17 February 1989

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* E/ECA/TPCW.10/1.
** E/ECA/CM.15/1.

A. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The fifth meeting of the Joint Committee on Human Settlements and Environment was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 13 to 17 February 1990 to review the activities carried out by member States during the past two years as follow-up to decisions taken at the fourth meeting as well as the implementation of relevant resolutions of the ECA Conference of Ministers and the United Nations General Assembly.

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member States of the Economic Commission for Africa: Algeria, Cameroon, the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

3. Switzerland attended the meeting as an observer.

4. The following United Nations organs, organizations and bodies were represented at the meeting: International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/Habitat), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Health Organization (WHO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

5. The following intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations attended as observers: Organization of African Unity (OAU), Pan-African News Agency (PANA), Programme Solidarity Habitat (PSH) and Shelter-Afrique.

Opening addresses (agenda item 1)

6. In opening the meeting, Comrade Zewde Teklu, Alternate Member of the Central Committee of the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE), Commissioner in charge of Construction, Natural Resources and Physical Plan of the Office of National Committee for Central Planning welcomed participants to the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

7. He emphasized that settlements and environment were the two major concerns of Governments of member States in Africa, and also engage the attention of many international organizations. It was also well recognized that both issues were inter-related and hence treating them at the same forum was appropriate and beneficial. When examined in their totality, settlements and environment encompass the whole gamut of social and economic development components of a given region.

8. He pointed out that the interrelationship of settlements and environment had become obvious when issues related to regional carrying capacity were discussed. The concept of carrying capacity would of necessity merge population and resources together in order to address other concepts like sustainable development in relation to settlements and environment as a package. Within this context, he said, African priority areas included:

halting environmental degradation; enhancing food-producing capacity; achieving self-sufficiency in energy; and correcting the imbalance between population and resources.

9. As an example, the Commissioner continued, Ethiopia, one of the countries worst affected by the effects of environmental degradation, was making some progress in the fields of settlements, afforestation, soil and water conservation.

10. Since 1985 the Government had embarked upon a planned settlement programme with the main objectives of relocation of people from drought-affected, degraded and populated areas to more fertile areas of the country. Recent evaluations of the settlement programme indicate that despite the commendable achievements, various issues related to land-use planning, deforestation, farming systems, provision of infrastructure, etc., would have to be studied in depth in order to strengthen the settlement programme.

11. Turning to problems of the environment, the Commissioner said that the implementation of the Cairo Programme of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) required the presentation of the "three village projects" to donors and allocation of Ethiopia's IPF fund towards the implementation of these projects. Ethiopia had complied with this and had prepared the projects and presented them of the Nairobi Donors Conference. Ethiopia had also made financial commitment out of its IPF fund to these projects. His country had also agreed to participate in the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) and was in the process of making funds available to pay its contribution. They were also executing settlement, housing and environment programmes in the spirit of the Lagos Plan of Action, the Global Strategy for Shelter and the various ECA, OAU and UNEP initiatives.

12. Concluding, he emphasized that many initiatives for international and regional co-operation had been taken, various protocols and conventions signed, organizations and committees established in the fields of settlements and environment. These initiatives by themselves had not been able to produce the desired results although time and again Africans had expressed the need for translating these protocols and agreements into meaningful development actions. He hoped that participants would deliberate on the practical aspects of settlements and environment in Africa and on the transformation of words into action.

13. In his opening statement, the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa reviewed the problems of human settlements and environment facing Africa.

14. With respect to human settlements, there was a growing polarization of economic activities between the urban and rural sectors due to the fact that there were no adequate production and trade channels to promote the integrated development of the two sectors. It was therefore necessary for each African country to formulate a coherent and comprehensive human settlements policy in the context of national economic and social development

planning. Such a policy should consist of establishing or strengthening networks of small- and medium-sized towns that offer a choice between living in the urban or rural areas and provide rural areas access to a wide range of services, facilities and job prospects. Such intermediate towns could help to bring about economic recovery by playing the role of regional, commercial and industrial centres and hubs that permit the decentralization of production units, transport, commerce, education, services and government departments and consequently reverse the current rural-urban drift.

15. General Assembly resolution 42/191 on the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 which indicated how action could be co-ordinated to tackle the thorny issue of the homeless and of housing in general. He urged African countries to define their priorities and establish programmes and projects to improve the housing conditions of the most disadvantaged people.

16. Through the project on the development of building materials which had been submitted to UNDP for financing, ECA was trying to propose ways and means of developing the building sectors through the production of local building materials.

17. With respect to environment, the problems that African economies had been facing for nearly a decade were partly due to the problem of managing the environment and natural disasters such as drought which, together with desertification, was one of the priorities of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery.

18. Finally, he said that the solution of Africa's human settlements and environmental problems depended, to a large extent, on the determination and efforts of member States and on the guidelines they proposed to ECA for the establishment of appropriate programmes.

19. The representative of UNCHS (Habitat) gave an overview of its activities in Africa, with particular reference to the issues before the meeting and referred to the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 launched by the General Assembly of the United Nations through its resolution 42/191. Rural/urban settlements needed to be planned in an integrated way within the framework of national development. Maximum emphasis must be placed on community participation. Some of the important areas include institution building, human resources development, integrated settlement planning, rural housing, community services and infrastructure, creation of small-scale building materials industries, development of the indigenous construction sector, application of appropriate technologies as well as land and finance for human settlements. Possible approaches include the development of a system of intermediate settlements schemes, village amalgamation, employment-generation schemes, development of rural regional institutions responsible for settlement planning, housing and rural up-grading.

20. As regards building materials, special attention should be paid to small-scale production of building materials and development of appropriate technologies and standards as well as human resources development. Infrastructure and services need to be improved and distributed equitably

with special attention to the provision of water supply, sanitation, health and education services in rural and urban settlements.

21. The Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 launched by the General Assembly of the United Nations under its resolution 42/191 calls upon governments to adopt national shelter strategies to meet the challenge of shelter for all to the year 2000. The fundamental policy change required is from direct government provision of shelter to an "enabling" approach which allows the full potential and resources of all the actors in shelter production and improvement to be mobilized. This enabling approach is thus the basic premise of the strategy and as such applies to both national and international organizations. The Commission on Human Settlements will act as the intergovernmental body and UNCHS (Habitat) as the secretariat and lead agency for co-ordinating the implementation of the strategy. UNCHS (Habitat) is ready to support the efforts of African countries in this challenging task.

22. In his opening statement, the representative of the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) said that problems relating to human settlements and the environment were very crucial and, as such, were of great significance to OAU. The Organization's work on drought, desertification and famine as well as the resolution adopted by the twenty-fourth Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the dumping of toxic and industrial wastes in Africa were proof of how seriously it took the issue. The highly sensitive issue of toxic wastes was one of the main pillars of OAU policy in the field of environment. OAU had also set up an emergency fund to assist countries affected by natural disasters.

23. In his statement, the representative of UNEP said that the economic and social crisis which hit Africa in full force in 1983-1984 was still around. The same destructive patterns of environmental degradation which created the pictures of drought and famine that so shocked the world at the time were still at work. As a result, Africa was facing immense ecological problems caused by long-term environmental decline. Extensive rather than intensive farming and the failure to introduce adequate investment inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizer and irrigation in an environmentally sound manner made Africa the only continent in the world where per capita food production had failed to keep up with population growth.

24. UNEP had, he continued, initiated important projects and programmes in Africa including desertification control, vegetation and forest cover monitoring, development of alternative sources of energy, environmental legislation and machinery, environmental awareness, agroforestry and drought-resistant trees, sand-dune stabilization, control of over-grazing, food security, marine resources protection and development, water resources management, human health and integrated pest management and wild life. His organization was also helping Sudano-Sahelian countries in their efforts to combat desertification through the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office which is partially funded by UNEP.

25. Also in response to the crisis and as a direct contribution to the implementation of both the OAU and the United Nations recovery programmes

for Africa, UNEP, in co-operation with the OAU and ECA brought together in Cairo in December 1985 African Environment Ministers to discuss and adopt a concrete Programme of Action aimed at halting the degradation of the natural resources base and to progressively rehabilitate it with the fundamental goal of achieving self-sufficiency in food and energy in the shortest possible time, through the mobilization of the scientific and technical capabilities available in Africa and utilizing local skills and experiences to seek economically feasible, environmentally sound and socially acceptable solutions to problems at the grass-root level.

26. Following the call from the OAU, UNEP undertook activities to enable African and other countries to deal with serious environmental problems, particularly those pertaining to their environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, and the control of transboundary movements of these wastes. For this purpose, UNEP had prepared a draft Global Convention which would be signed in Basel, Switzerland in March 1989.

Election of officers (agenda item 2)

27. After the opening ceremonies, the following Bureau was elected:

Chairman:	Hon. Albert Yangari, High Commissioner of Gabon
First Vice-Chairman:	Hon. L.J. Sonko, Minister for Local Government and Lands of the Gambia
Second Vice-Chairman:	Mr. Zaouche Slimane, Deputy Director, Ministry of Interior and Environment of Algeria
Third Vice-Chairman:	H.E. Mr. Mosoke Swaib, Ambassador of Uganda
Rapporteur:	Mrs. Saha Vijaya Lakshmi, Principal Planner, Ministry of Housing, Lands and Environment of Mauritius

B. AGENDA

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (agenda item 3)

28. The Joint Committee adopted without amendment the following agenda as contained in document E/ECA/IGRC/HS/ENV/89/V/Inf.1:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
4. Plenary meeting for presentation of working documents:
   (a) Human settlements;
   (b) Environment.

5. Plenary session for the presentation of country reports on the national state of human settlements and environment.

6. Sub-committee A: Human settlements

   (a) Study on policies and programmes in human settlements to accelerate rural transformation and reduce disparities between urban and rural areas in Africa (E/ECA/HUS/38);

   (b) Infrastructure development for upgrading rural settlements and improving rural living standards (E/ECA/HUS/40);

   (c) Appropriate designs and applied technologies for the development of human settlements infrastructures in Africa (E/ECA/HUS/41);

   (d) Role of small-scale building materials industries in the implementation of human settlements development programmes and rural development projects in the African region (E/ECA/HUS/42).

7. Sub-committee B: Environment

   (a) Report on the development of suitable measures to combat desertification and the impacts of drought in Africa (E/ECA/ENV/55);

   (b) Modalities for incorporating the Cairo Programme of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment into ongoing national environment programmes (E/ECA/ENV/56);

   (c) Report on the ratification and accession to international and regional environmental agreements with particular emphasis on conservation of tropical forests and their implementation by member States (E/ECA/ENV/57)

   (d) Report on the progress in the establishment of the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) (E/ECA/ENV/58);

   (e) Report on the implementation of the 1988-1989 environment in Africa work programme and proposals for the 1990-1991 biennium (E/ECA/ENV/59);

   (f) Report on the implementation of the recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development (E/ECA/ENV/60).

8. Report of the sub-committees at plenary session for consideration of recommendations.

9. Any other business.

10. Adoption of the report and closure of the meeting.

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Plenary meeting for the presentation of working documents (agenda item 4)

A. Human settlements

29. A representative of the secretariat presented document E/ECA/HUS/45 which outlined the major activities carried out by the secretariat between March 1987 and December 1988 in the sphere of human settlements. These activities may be summarized as follows:

(a) Study on research programmes on human settlements planning techniques for different environments in the region;

(b) Study on planning methodologies and techniques for the development of rural settlements in Africa;

(c) Study on policies and programmes in human settlements for accelerated rural transformation and redressing the rural-urban imbalance in Africa;

(d) Study on infrastructure development for upgrading rural settlements and improving rural living standards;

(e) Study on approaches to the formulation of comprehensive construction planning and implementation policies in Africa;

(f) Study on the organizational needs of the construction sector, in the provision of productive and support services in rural areas;

(g) Study on guidelines for the development of appropriate building materials production for low-cost housing construction;

(h) Study on appropriate design and applied technologies for the development of human settlements infrastructures in Africa; and

(i) Study on the role of small-scale building materials industries in the implementation of human settlements development programmes and projects for rural transformation in the African region.

30. In accordance with the recommendations of the fourth meeting of the Joint Committee, ECA had prepared and submitted for UNDP financing a project proposal entitled "Development of building materials industries in Africa". The preparatory phase of the project had just been completed and the ECA secretariat ECA was waiting for the UNDP response before initiating the implementation phase.

31. At the request of the Senegalese Research Centre for Housing, Urban Affairs and Architecture (Centre sénégalais de recherche pour l'habitat, l'urbanisme et l'architecture, CRHUA), ECA undertook an advisory mission to Senegal to assist that centre in the definition, organization and development of manpower and technical training programmes in the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Housing of Senegal.

32. In the course of this work, the major problem which arose was the lack of human and financial resources. The Joint Committee was, therefore, asked to pay particular attention to the question of mobilizing these resources, so that the secretariat might function more efficiently, particularly in carrying out field studies and project execution.

33. Following the presentation of the document, the representative of Algeria asked for a clarification on the participation of his country in the Expert Group Meeting on Planning Methodologies and Techniques for the Development of Rural Settlements held from 5 to 9 December 1988 in Addis Ababa. The representative of Senegal wished to correct the title of CRHUA to "Centre Sénégalais de recherche sur l'habitat, l'urbanisme et l'architecture".

34. In his reply, the representative of the secretariat stated that Algeria had been invited to the Expert Group Meeting and that the secretariat had expected the paper which the Algerian expert was to produce.

B. Environment

35. In presenting the activities of the environment in Africa programme for the period under review, the representative of the secretariat explained that programme activities were focused on the development of environmental capabilities including conservation of resources and pollution control. The areas of activity included:

(a) Technical co-operation for developing national environmental capabilities

36. Activities on combating drought and desertification control were the main pre-occupation under this element of the programme. He then presented document E/ECA/ENV/55, entitled Report on the development of suitable measures to combat desertification and the impacts of drought in Africa. It reviewed the progress being made by ECA member States in developing appropriate measures for combating the impacts of drought and the process of desertification. Recommendations are then made as to how these measures can be enhanced. He added that, to further assist member States, the secretariat had also provided resources for advisory services on drought and desertification control. These services were at the disposal of member States on request.

(b) Co-ordination of environmental activities within the Commission, with UNEP and with other international organizations working on environmental problems in Africa

37. Under this activity the representative of the secretariat presented document E/ECA/ENV/58 entitled Report on the progress in the establishment of the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD). The document was in response to resolution 651 (XXIII) of 16 April 1988 on Resources for the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) which requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission, in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of WMO, to continue to carry out all necessary activities to make the newly established Centre operational. Participants were expected make proposals as to how to encourage member States

to ratify the constitution of the Centre, make their contribution to the recurrent budget of the Centre in order to make it operational as soon as possible. He also presented document E/ECA/ENV/60 entitled Report on the implementation of recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCFD) which was a report on follow-up activities to General Assembly resolutions 42/187 and 42/86 on UNEP Perspective for the Environment to the Year 2000 and Beyond. This document was provided for information purposes. However, participants could make suggestions which would enhance the implementation of these resolutions and recommendations in Africa.

(c) Environmental assessment and management relating to the impacts of development on natural resource utilization, including pollution control and waste disposal

38. Under this programme element two reports were presented to the Joint Committee for consideration. Document E/ECA/ENV/56 entitled Modalities for incorporating the Cairo Programme of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment into ongoing national environment programmes reviewed the programmes of the Ministerial Conference and made proposals on how they could be integrated into ongoing national programmes. Participants were expected to discuss the proposals and make recommendations to member States on the matter.

39. The second was contained in document E/ECA/ENV/57 entitled Report on the ratification and accession to international and regional environmental agreements with particular emphasis on conservation of tropical forests and their implementation by member States. This report suggested some of the possible reasons for the low rate of accession to regional and international conventions on the environment by African countries, and proposed modalities for accelerating the rate and implementation, by them, of these conventions and agreements.

40. Two technical publications were programmed for the biennium, namely Environmental problems of underground water resources development in drought-prone countries of Africa, for agriculturists and environmental managers and Pollution control and waste disposal problems in selected African countries: A case study for the Industrial Development Decade for Africa, for industrial planners and environmental managers, 1980-1990. Due to resource constraints for the 1988-1989 biennium, one of the publications was being reformulated for reprogramming and delivery during the 1990-1991 biennium.

(d) Development of manpower capabilities and creation of environmental awareness through environmental training and educational activities

41. Two main activities have been carried out under this programme element. The first one deals with the incorporation of environmental components into the programmes of ECA-sponsored intergovernmental institutions. The second activity has been the servicing of seminar and study tours to China and to the Soviet Union.

42. In order to keep abreast of the state of the development of national manpower capabilities, a Directory of African Environmental Experts and List

of Institutions on Environmental Matters in Africa had been published. Members of the Joint Committee were requested to fill in the questionnaire at the back of the directory and return it to the secretariat, as indicated.

43. As concerns the programme proposals for 1990-1991, the following programme elements were presented:

(a) Technical co-operation for developing environmental capabilities, including the development of manpower capabilities;

(b) Environmental assessment and management relating to the impacts of the development and utilization of natural resources, and pollution control;

(c) Promotion of environmental awareness.

Plenary session for the presentation of country reports on the national state of human settlements and environment (agenda item 5)

44. The representative of Ethiopia said that the felt needs of the majority of the population to alter the painful situation it was in found expression in the form of the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. In the process, the popular revolution based its programme for change on socialist values, which had been guiding the growth and development of the functions of production, consumption and distribution since then.

45. Drought-affected, landless or casual farm labour households have been assisted to move into new and relatively better serviced resettlement areas. At the national level, the Ethiopian Peasant Association served as the focal point for peasant issues. To improve marketing services, the majority of the Peasant Associations are organized into service co-operatives.

46. Rural settlements have also been benefiting from manpower development efforts enhanced through the expansion of informal and formal education. National capacity building in research and extension is enabling rural settlements to further improve their productivity. Within this context shelter, roads, stores, offices, and market places had been constructed on one hand, and construction carried out to provide basic services on the other.

47. As part of capital formation, capital goods like machineries and hand tools were provided mainly to settlers in the resettlement programmes in order to help them in their productive activities.

48. He also declared that his country was putting considerable effort into restructuring its rural settlement patterns with the ultimate goal of enabling the rural population to attain a better standard of living through institution building and capital formation.

49. The Government has established the Ethiopian Valley Development Study Authority which surveys and makes inventories of the natural resources of the country, as well as formulating plans for their sustainable exploitation. The Government also collaborates with the International Union for Conservation

of Natural Resources, and is in the process of developing a national conservation strategy. Finally, the Government has established an intersectoral and interdisciplinary group to draft the environmental management law.

50. The representative of Uganda reported that for almost 20 years the housing situation in Uganda had been deteriorating due to a number of factors including general instability which prevailed in the past. Population growth had also worsened the problem, creating a housing backlog of over 100,000 units in the whole country. To alleviate the situation, the Government has developed a definite housing policy aimed at increasing the production of building materials and facilitating with essential housing inputs such as finance and the provision of infrastructure while at the same time encouraging home ownership. To implement the housing policy a number of projects have been indicated emphasizing public participation in housing construction including the participation of women. Among the projects mentioned were the Namuwongo upgrading and low-cost housing projects, Kampala, the Shelter Strategy project and one on local building materials.

51. In its endeavour the Government of Uganda had secured financial and other technical support from UNDP, Habitat and several multilateral and bilateral agencies such as the Government of Finland and Shelter Afrique within the context of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. He also reported that there were other projects such as the Namungona Housing Scheme which were in the pipeline and required funding.

52. The representative of Gabon said that his country had a population of 1,500,000, 50 per cent of which lived in the largest cities, Libreville, Port Gentil and Franceville. Seventy-two per cent of the country's economic activities were concentrated in the three cities.

53. Since 1970, due to economic expansion, urban areas, particularly the three cities mentioned above, had been developing rapidly. As a result of a shortage of jobs, the other urban and rural centres had gradually been transformed into labour reservoirs. If the trend continued, it would cause financial, economic, social and cultural imbalances. That was why a national physical planning scheme was drawn up in 1977; in pursuance of that scheme, the Government of Gabon was providing each rural centre with miscellaneous facilities and, since 1977, a vast village water supply programme had been established.

54. The policy on shelter and town planning defined objectives to be attained and identified resources for achieving those objectives. The overall objective was to ensure that each and every Gabonese had decent housing. To attain that objective, the Government had begun to produce 300 building plots a year and to supply low-cost housing. It had established a new housing development strategy which contained the following measures: seeking fresh financing and permanent sources of funding; reducing building costs through appropriate standards and the use of local materials; private sector involvement; recovery of costs and recycling of funds; giving a fresh impetus to the self-construction programme; establishing a body for developing urban land and strengthening rural housing policy.

55. In his statement, the representative of Guinea said that the financial and economic coercion imposed on the peasants between 1958 and March 1984 and the forfeiture of fundamental liberties under the first republic, with the corollary of the decline in agricultural production and the instigation of food import policies destined exclusively to feed the population in the capital, together with excessive centralization of the few facilities that were developed around Conakry had led to a rapid and massive drift of people from the countryside to the capital.

56. This disorganized growth caused severe problems to an area poorly supplied with roads, sanitation and drainage networks, energy and productive and collective facilities. The lack of a minimum housing programme aggravated living conditions in the town. Insubstantial and unhygienic dwellings, in which an increasingly large population lived, had been increasing steadily, filling up first the areas with a minimum of service networks which, lacking essential maintenance, had broken down.

57. In spite of the powerful constraints caused partly by the scarcity of imported building materials and partly by very low available housing and land allocation, such growth spread into state land reserves and into vacant areas, where basic networks (roads, water supply and power) were not available.

58. As a result, the Military Committee for National Recovery (CMRN) drew up a new urban and housing policy capable of redressing the current problems and preventing future distortions:

(a) The first stage consisted of drawing up an urban master plan for the town of Conakry until the year 2010;

(b) The objective of the second stage was to draw up a national physical development plan (SNAT): four regional plans corresponding to the four natural regions of the country and seven urban master plans for the provincial capitals.

59. The great diversity of soils and underground resources distribution over the whole country, together with historical and cultural factors, rather than policy, favoured the re-establishment of a balance in national development. The road and railway networks needed to be totally rehabilitated; new roads had to be built to ensure east/west and north/south links. The basis of this extension of communications infrastructure was the development of agriculture, protection of the environment and expansion of agro-industries aimed at food self-sufficiency and the well-being of the population.

60. The third stage envisaged the creation of rural development communities within the framework of the major decentralized and democratic planning policies. Large villages and rural towns must be provided with production facilities (grain silos, watering points, mills, etc.) and foster low-cost housing by using improved local materials such as stabilized earth bricks, appropriate roofing and fixtures as inputs in traditionally built housing.

61. Progress on improving the rural habitat is in strict parallel with the solutions put forward on low-cost housing in the towns.

62. The focus of the Government of the second republic was well regarded by the EEC countries which, within the framework of the Lome II Convention, had granted a considerable financial contribution to Guinea, of which 80 per cent must be devoted to improving life in the countryside.

63. The project on serviced land plots, which must be replicated in the major urban areas within the country had, therefore, a wider context than the urban one, to examine and try to reduce the contrast between town and country.

64. Appropriate institutional structures were being progressively established to sustain this general policy.

65. The representative of the Gambia reported that his Government had taken due note of the problems of shelter and had given high priority both for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH) and the formulation of a national strategy for shelter in the year 2000. This brief country report was meant to inform participants how the Gambia had addressed those issues.

66. As was common in other developing countries, he said the Gambia had also experienced problems of rapid population growth and urbanization. As a result of massive urbanization and concentration of urban population in the Greater Banjul Area and insufficient government response to deal with the shelter and urban development and management problems, shelter conditions, infrastructure and services had deteriorated. There had been a remarkable increase in overcrowding, particularly in the Greater Banjul Area.

67. In view of the difficult economic situation prevailing in the country he said, institutional finance available for house building was very insignificant, compared to the need. The bulk of the dwelling units and more specifically low-income housing had been privately financed because the low-income housing population had been denied access to institutional housing finance.

68. Although attempts were being made to utilize local building materials the housing sector in general still relies on imported building materials which has proved to be very expensive.

69. He continued that the Gambia had the required institutional set-up for policy formulation, implementation and monitoring of the shelter improvement and related services. The Ministry for Local Government and Lands and its technical departments provided the required institutional services for shelter policy formulation and monitoring while the Social Security and Housing Finance Corporation is responsible for the administration of housing finance and implementation of certain housing projects.

70. He concluded that, although the Gambia has not experienced the acute problems of "homelessness", the shelter and related problems facing the urban and rural population are serious enough to demand greater attention by the Government and people. With the assistance of the World Bank, they had

embarked on a multifaceted urban management and development project which will demonstrate and improve the capabilities of the Government to handle the shelter situation in a positive way.

71. The representative of Senegal indicated that the population of Senegal, which was currently estimated at 7 million would increase by 42 per cent to 10 million by the year 2001. The urban population would then be 4,525,000; one out of two Senegalese would be living in cities. The population of the capital, Dakar, estimated at 1,600,000 people would increase to 2,650,000 by the year 2001.

72. The long-term policy objective was to reduce regional disparities and to develop cities in an equitable manner using standard town plans. In addition, several land development and plot allocation plans were prepared and implemented by the Ministry of Town Planning and Housing in villages, starting with the largest ones.

73. With regard to low-cost housing, the Ministry had implemented some activities such as service sites, allocation of administrative building plots, restructuring of spontaneous settlements and establishment of SCAT-URBAM to develop urban land.

74. A programme to set up sites and services schemes and build low-cost housing had been included in the plan of action that the Ministry of Town Planning and Housing planned to implement between 1989 and 1993. The aim of the programme was to improve the living conditions of the people through the provision of primary facilities (health, water) so as to reduce the gap between urban and rural areas.

75. To that end, the Government had launched a vast programme to increase the number of wells which should result in slowing down the rate of rural and trans-border migration and supply of pumping equipment with adequate rates of flow. There were also plans to train operators of well-drilling equipment designated by the Management Committees in how to maintain such equipment.

76. With regard to health facilities, investments made in the rural areas were part of a pyramidal health system: at the local level were small health centres, rural maternities village pharmacies and health posts; at the first intermediate level were health centres; at the second intermediate level were regional hospitals; at the top of the pyramid were national hospitals. The aim was to create an environment that was propitious to the economic development of rural areas and provide the rural areas with services, facilities and other essential factors for agricultural production and marketing.

77. The representative of Swaziland stated that the development of rural settlements is achieved through the rural development areas (RDAs) whose aims include the improvement of the general standard of living for the people, the broadest participation of Swazi people in the process of national development, increase in agricultural productivity and protection of natural resources.

78. The Human Settlements Authority, he said was expected to be established within the framework of resolution 42/191 on the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000. In addition, it was felt that a National Housing Board should be established to assist the Authority.

79. In 1988 two Acts of Parliament came into operation, namely the Human Settlements Authority Act and the National Housing Board Act.

80. Women, he continued, were also involved in the provision of low-income shelter especially in the rural areas. Women are taught at the Village Technology Unit how to make blocks, using soil and cement. The tiles, made from a mixture of cement and sisal, are used for roofing. The Ministry of Education had experimented with the building of schools using indigenous materials. Efforts in production of indigenous materials were already paying off.

81. He concluded that desertification in Swaziland was caused mainly by overgrazing and poor conservation measures. Soil degradation was, however, the major environmental problem facing the country. A number of measures have, however, been taken to arrest the advance of desertification including the establishment of an Environmental Council to co-ordinate environment management. Swaziland has also enacted several Acts of Parliament to enhance protection and conservation of the environment.

82. The representative of Zambia gave an overview of his country's new economic recovery programme which would be executed from the country's resources. The programme took into account the country's problems of very rapid population growth, high rates of urbanization as a result of rural exodus and the influx of refugees from neighbouring countries. This rapid rate of urbanization had pushed the country's needs for housing to a minimum of 75,000 dwellings per annum to meet the requirements for the year 2000.

83. Zambia had, therefore, drawn up a housing programme for the period 1989-1993 which provided finance for a general housing programme and which would also seek donors' support under the Global Shelter Strategy to the Year 2000. To support this, there is provision of urban public utilities under a water and sanitation programme and energy projects.

84. As concerns the environment, he continued, his country had adapted a national conservation strategy aimed at the environmentally sound management and utilization of national resources for development. The major environmental problems the country was facing were soil erosion, water degradation, rapid deforestation, inadequate legislative and administrative mechanisms to handle environmental issues and inadequate public awareness. The country was also facing the problem of lack of resources to implement programmes aimed at solving the environmental problems mentioned above.

85. The representative of Mauritius summarized the recent satisfactory economic performance of her country over the last few years and mentioned that this has intensified pressure on land and other natural resources, as well as on the manmade environment. Government policies henceforth would be through concerted action on both the built and unbuilt environment.

86. Regarding the shelter aspect, Mauritius has been beset over the last three decades by the need to house the low income in a cyclone-proof and hygienic shelter. Past cyclone emergency programmes had been interminable, costly, very much beyond national and family affordability and yet left a substantial proportion of the target population unserved.

87. This has led to a significant housing policy shift, first through the concept of core units, with great cost consciousness and limited subsidy, to the now current predominant "catalyst" concept of self-help, quality of life, home ownership backed by fiscal as well as financial incentives.

88. Regarding the environment sector, Mauritius did not have a co-ordinated practice for a long time. But now that there are tremendous pressures upon its resources, it is aware that, unless increasing emphasis is given to the protection of the environment, development activities will outstrip the regenerative capacities of the island.

89. With the support of the World Bank, UNDP and the donor community, Mauritius is embarking upon an ambitious environment investment programme, dealing with comprehensive policy, institutional, legislative as well as infrastructure aspects.

90. The inception of project implementation has started and the programme is expected to be complete in early 1995.

91. The representative of Algeria said that his country was facing the problems of both developed and developing countries. Such problems adversely affected natural resources, public health, the environment and the health of the people. The purity of underground water was being endangered by wastes from industrial plants, the uncontrolled use of pharmaceuticals and the disposal of urban wastes in water courses.

92. In order to solve the above-mentioned problems, his Government had initiated the following actions: reviewing legislative and institutional measures on environmental matters; monitoring sources of pollution; monitoring the environment; providing technical assistance to local communities and economic operators; combating industrial pollution; managing toxic wastes; preventing major risks stemming from certain industrial activities; managing liquid wastes; physical planning; wild life development and conservation; and desertification control.

93. With respect to human settlements, the main action taken to solve land problems in the urban - beginning with urban settlements on the one hand and rural settlements on the other hand - and rural areas was to promulgate a decree on the establishment and management of common land reserves. Action had also been taken with respect to the establishment of integrated housing (housing units/facilities).

94. As far as rural housing was concerned, the following activities had been undertaken: construction of socialist villages; establishment of communities in border and mountain areas; provision of assistance to self-construction schemes.

95. The representative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) confirmed the fact that his organization, in close co-operation with ECA and other agencies of the United Nations, especially UNDP, FAO, UNEP, UNESCO and the World Bank, had worked hard to ensure that the activities of the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) started quickly, thanked the Government of Niger, the host country for the Centre, for its efforts to secure support for the Centre from ECA member States and potential donor countries and organizations, drew the Committee's attention to the need for member States to ratify the statute of the Centre as soon as possible and pay their contributions to the Centre's budget as it would help to convince potential donors at an upcoming conference to be held in early May 1989 about how committed African States were to the Centre.

96. He informed the Committee about ongoing activities to assist countries of the south-western Indian Ocean devastated by tropical cyclones; such activities included the preparation of technical assistance projects to be submitted to potential donors such as UNDP and the EEC.

97. The representative of UNESCO informed the meeting that the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) programme had implemented several types of pilot projects in Africa including the following: The integrated projects on arid lands (IPAL) in Kenya, Tunisia and Lesotho and pastoral training course in Senegal were ongoing and had generated scientific data. Resource use management guidelines have also been developed; two projects in the tai forest in Côte d'Ivoire and miombo and gravamba in Zaire continue to generate scientific data for the better management of these systems; there are now some 30 biosphere reserves in Africa in some 20 countries for conservation of biological diversity. There are also sites for ecological research and monitoring; studies on urban ecosystems are now ongoing in Zambia, Kenya and Nigeria.

98. The representative of Shelter Afrique reported that during the past year, his organization had concentrated its efforts on increasing the number of physical housing units for the low-income categories of Africa. They had reviewed and approved projects worth $US 60 million to which it is expected to contribute $US 12.5 million.

99. In order to provide lasting solutions to the shelter problems of the urban poor, Shelter Afrique had redefined strategies in the shelter sector mainly to:

(a) Assist in the mobilization of resources on the domestic front in individual member countries through innovative policies;

(b) Participate and assist in institution building in individual countries by strengthening and or establishing housing finance institutions, e.g., housing banks, building societies and co-operative housing societies;

(c) Develop the local building materials base of member countries;

(d) Augment the organization's capital base; and

(e) Create an African Housing Fund which would eventually cater for the needs of the poorest of the poor.

Sub-Committee A: Human Settlements (agenda item 6)

Study on policies and programmes in human settlements for accelerated rural transformation and redressing the rural/urban imbalance in Africa (E/ECA/HUS/38)

100. In presenting document E/ECA/HUS/38, the representative of the secretariat outlined the historical development of the African land area before and after the political independence of the African States. He then defined the imbalances as being the various inequalities arising between the different zones of the same country. The causes of such a phenomenon may be linked to policy of neglect (during the colonial era) or to specific priorities (political options).

101. He stressed that the majority of Africa's population is rural, the rural environment vast and sparsely populated, while the urban areas are characterized by great densities of population in fairly limited areas. The rural population is almost exclusively engaged in the primary sector, while in the urban areas the population works in the secondary and tertiary sectors.

102. After independence, almost all the countries set up administrative and economic structures responsible for implementing their development plans. Few countries had established national land development plans. The efforts put into economic development were by far more important than those put into land development. Some countries which did devise such plans had a two-fold approach which favoured urban rather than rural areas.

103. The document also analysed the policies and programmes undertaken by some African countries to correct the imbalances between the towns and the countryside. The examples cited were from Senegal, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Gabon, the Central African Republic, Rwanda, Tunisia, Zambia, Kenya, Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Lesotho.

104. The document concluded by stressing the necessity for a new approach integrating rural and urban areas in order to reduce the disparities. The essential objective of this approach would be to define a balanced economic development policy for the whole country, a better division of revenue within the area, the decentralization of economic activities and the involvement of the local population in the country's development.

105. Three categories of recommendations were put forward, those at national, subregional and regional levels. At the national level, the recommendations were concerned with action to solve the disparities, concentrating on internal controllable factors, regional planning and the reorientation of economic factors to favour the rural areas. At subregional level, the creation of inter-State groups is envisaged to attack common problems of area disparity in different States. At the regional level, it is proposed to create an integrated economic area to combat the external factors.

106. In the debate which followed, some participants contributed, either speaking of the experiences of their States or adding to the data in the document which had been presented. The proposals made concerned the legislative measures to be taken to solve the problems of imbalance between rural and urban areas; effective decentralization both at economic and administrative levels; inter-community solidarity and the participation of

local populations in the definition and implementation of development activities in their localities.

Infrastructure development for upgrading rural settlements and improving rural living standards (E/ECA/HUS/40)

107. The representative of the secretariat introduced document E/ECA/HUS/40 and indicated that development programming and project formulation in Africa had been largely characterized by an urban bias, namely by the concentration of most development projects in the cities. Yet Africa was predominantly rural in terms of space, population and economic activities.

108. Rural development had long been equated with agricultural development. It was, however, essential to adopt a more comprehensive conception and definition that recognized the necessarily integrated nature and approach to rural development. Rural development should include a series of mutually supporting activities oriented towards the improvement of the living standards of rural populations and the transformation of the rural sector as a whole. The main factors required for the physical transformation of rural settlements included spatial organization, the development of infrastructures, technology expressed in terms of capital, materials and so on.

109. Transport in rural areas had become one of the priority elements of overall development programmes. Road transport was considered as an integral part of the agricultural production process since it could help to create production surpluses by lowering transport costs of farm inputs and farm produce and eventually opening up rural economies.

110. Since the starting point of economic development in Africa was the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector, it was important to provide infrastructures and the necessary services in the rural areas to support the development effort. The experiences of Zimbabwe, the United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya and Nigeria were examples that demonstrated the importance of road infrastructures in the development of rural areas.

111. In the ensuing discussions, some participants spoke about the experience of their countries stressing the high costs of building infrastructures. They requested the assistance of ECA and other international organizations in reducing such costs. One delegation mentioned the problem of harmonizing the institutional framework since there were usually several ministerial departments involved in human settlements and environment. Another delegation expressed regret over the fact that the study covered only four countries while there were interesting experiences in other countries.

112. The representative of the secretariat replied that due to limited human and financial resources, the secretariat had been unable to collect data from all African countries. More often than not, the questionnaires sent to the countries were not returned. He stressed the need for countries to fill in questionnaires, return them to the secretariat and provide all the information necessary for carrying out the studies.

Appropriate designs and applied technologies for the development of human settlements infrastructures in Africa (E/ECA/HUS/41)

113. The representative of the secretariat introduced document E/ECA/HUS/41 and said that it was devoted entirely to technologies for developing water

supply and sanitation facilities with special emphasis on analysing experiences emanating from their application and outlining some criteria for construction technologies. With respect to water supply problems in rural and urban areas, nearly 60 per cent of Africa's urban population had access to drinking water while in the rural areas, where nearly 70 per cent of the continent's total population lived, only 30 per cent of the inhabitants had access to safe drinking water.

114. After reviewing the selection of appropriate design and construction technologies, he made recommendations for action at the national and international levels. At the national level, the recommendations included promoting the use of appropriate technologies, the development of local capacities for the fabrication of equipment; providing technical assistance to community groups, vocational training, institutional support; and popularizing appropriate technologies. At the international level, the recommendations included providing support for research and development on innovative and low-cost technologies, assistance in training technicians, developing design standards and specifications, strengthening local capacities for the manufacture of equipment and tools; promoting the exchange of information among African countries and between them and countries outside the region.

115. The discussions that ensued focused on sanitation problems. In that connection, the problem of underground and surface water pollution as a result of a high concentration of septic tanks was raised. The meeting expressed the hope that ECA and international organizations would continue carrying out research on sanitation.

116. The representative of the secretariat replied that ECA was prepared to co-ordinate research on sanitation, provided member States would co-operate in supplying the secretariat with necessary documentation and research materials. He also asked about the possibility of nominating focal points in member States with whom ECA could correspond directly.

Role of small-scale building materials industries in the implementation of human settlements development programmes and rural development projects in the African region (E/ECA/HUS/42)

117. In introducing document E/ECA/HUS/42, the representative of the secretariat said that the construction of adequate infrastructure, especially decent and durable housing, was the key to successful human settlements programmes. Therefore, the availability of good quality and cheap building materials was essential. That was particularly relevant in Africa where there had been a sharp decline in building activity over the past few years because of the high cost of the materials used and the strain they put on the balance of payments.

118. The document defined the characteristics of the building materials market in Africa. The formal market was characterized by very restrictive standards that were often inherited from industrialized countries, resulting in costly building techniques and the use of sophisticated materials which were the only ones to meet such standards. The informal market involved all those who built on their account. People on the latter market seldom bought supplies from large industrial plants; they often turned to craftsmen.

119. Small-scale building materials industries in Africa involved production units that required little investment to establish. Therefore, many small production units could be established depending on potential demand and the availability of raw materials on the spot. Studies had shown that raw materials such as clay, chalk, dolomite and vegetable fibres which were the basis for such an industry were generally abundant in almost all African countries. Producers were thus brought closer to users, which solved the problem of transport and at the same time reduced the price of materials.

120. Small-scale industry used simple technology developed by research centres specializing in building materials for developing countries. Because of their size they were much easier to manage. Although such units required little investment, they used considerable manpower. They therefore generated jobs, particularly in the rural areas.

121. In view of the problems that were facing human settlements development programmes, small-scale building materials industries in Africa might appear to be ways of reviving such programmes. They were able to produce materials of satisfactory quality under the same conditions as traditional crafts industries at comparable prices. However, as things stood now, such materials had not yet been accepted by the public. Consequently, considerable efforts had to be made to promote their use. Governments had a very important role to play by creating a favourable climate for the promotion of such materials, namely by revising standards, providing support to research and development agencies, reflecting the needs of the sector in their development policy and using such materials in public projects.

122. In the ensuing discussions, most participants gave an account of their respective experiences in the production and use of local building materials. Suggestions were made on how to get the public to change its attitude to local materials, on how to sell the idea of using local building materials to the public and propagate the use of such magerials and on developing research in order to reduce the costs of local materials. A revision of legislation was also proposed to guarantee the use of such materials. Other recommendations were made on the exchange of experiences and transfer of technology among African countries.

123. One delegation suggested that missions should be sent to member States to collect up-to-date information before finalizing documents. It also enquired about the status of the building materials development project in Africa.

124. The representative of Shelter-Afrique provided information on action taken by his organization to develop the production of local building materials: a prefeasibility study covers six African countries in that field, the establishment of an African Housing Fund for an experiment on training women in Kenya to produce local building materials and a symposium to be held in Uganda in May 1989 on the development and use of local building materials.

125. The representative of UNCHS (Habitat) stressed the need to persuade decision makers and local communities to use local building materials and technologies for shelter and infrastructure. It was essential to involve the people not only in the planning and development but also in the maintenance of shelter and infrastructure in both urban and rural areas.

126. The representative of the secretariat again indicated that the secretariat had neither enough staff nor financial resources to send missions to collect data in all African countries. With regard to the building materials development project in Africa, the preparatory phase had just been completed and the project document had been submitted to UNDP in January 1989 for financing.

Sub-Committee B: Environment (agenda item 7)

127. The Sub-committee on Environment met to review the activities of member States on the environment as well as the activities of the secretariat, particularly proposals for the 1990-1991 biennium, to ensure that they respond to the needs of member States.

128. The Chairman of the Sub-committee was Second Vice-Chairman from Algeria and the secretariat was assigned the role of rapporteur.

129. The secretariat was requested to present the working documents.

(a) Report on the development of suitable measures to combat desertification and the impacts of drought in Africa (E/ECA/ENV/55)

130. The representative of the secretariat stated that progress had been made by ECA member States in developing appropriate measures for combating the impacts of drought and the process of desertification. He pointed out that the activities of member States were mainly focused on conservation measures, monitoring and mapping and institutional and manpower development.

131. As concerns conservation measures, he said that, given the situation as it is in Africa, where most of the population virtually depended on the exploitation of the biospherical ecosystem for their livelihood, effective desertification control demanded an integration of protection and conservation measures. This was reflected in the rehabilitative measures being used by member States through afforestation, sand dune fixation and arid lands range management. The activities of the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Inter-governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), the Maghreb countries and the countries of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) were a clear demonstration of this situation.

132. Regarding monitoring, he pointed out that member States were not using fully the facilities provided within Africa for remote sensing, such as those provided by the Regional Centre for Training in Aero-space Surveys (RECTAS) at Ile-Ife and the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS) in Nairobi to facilitate the monitoring of desertification. Turning to institutional and manpower development, he said that, although there were subregional groupings as indicated above, there were very few institutions devoted to desert research and related manpower development.

133. During the discussion of the report, the representative of Algeria informed the participants that a "Green Dam" existed in his country which consisted of a reforestation band for stopping the expansion of the desert and which stretched from west to east of the country, with the potential of replication by neighbouring countries.

134. A number of participants reported on other measures to combat desertification. In this connection, the question of biomas as an alternative source of energy was raised. It was observed that cultural stigma existed about the use of biomas in Africa and that there was the need for sensitization for a change in mentality. The other problem with biomas was the fact that in many of the Sahelian countries the housing construction and cooking habits did not lend themselves to its use because most cooking was done in the open.

135. The representative of UNEP drew the attention of the participants to UNEP's mandate to co-ordinate the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and said that the organization was carrying out various activities with member States through the Desertification Control Programme Activity Centre and also through the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO), which is jointly funded by UNDP and UNEP. He encouraged member States to strengthen their strategies for implementing desertification control programmes and adopt concrete plans of action to combat desertification.

136. The representative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) made a brief review of his organization's activities in combating desertification. He pointed out that they were carrying out various activities with CILSS or ICRAF in the specific areas of drought control and related programmes. He added that WMO would be a significant contribution in assisting member States to enhance their desertification control activities.

137. The representative of UNESCO drew the attention of the Sub-committee to his organization's experience in integrated research and development in arid lands through its pilot projects in Kenya, Tunisia and Lesotho. These pilot activities had compiled a wealth of information on the management and rehabilitation of arid lands which should be shared by member States and other organizations.

138. After discussion of the different aspects of desertification control and the suggestions contained in the document, the participants recommended that member States should develop and/or strengthen their desert research and experimental capabilities to cover for:

(a) Social and economic considerations of pastoral communities in arid and semi-arid lands in relation to desertification control;

(b) Desertification and wind-sand research;

(c) Dune fixation research;

(d) Rehabilitation and land use research;

(e) Monitoring and mapping;

(f) Information diffusion;

(g) Bush fires and desertification.

(h) Modalities for incorporating the Cairo Programme of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment into ongoing national environmental programmes (E/ECA/ENV/56)

139. The representative of the secretariat pointed out that the report was a review of the programmes of AMCEN emphasizing the need for the integration of those programmes into ongoing national programmes.

140. In commencing the presentation, the representative of UNEP gave updates to some of the activities of AMCEN as of December 1988, including the work of the Committees on Deserts and Arid Lands, on Seas, on Forests and Woodlands and on Rivers and Lake Basins. He informed the Sub-committee that 29 countries had designated pilot villages for the village and stock-raising projects and 15 of them had already earmarked funds from their UNDP indicative planning funds and other sources for this purpose. He added that the Inter-agency Working Group of the Conference had also been very active. He concluded that the high level of participation by governments at this stage in the implementation of the Cairo Programme had not been matched by adequate financial contributions from governments for the success of the Programme, particularly as a catalyst for attracting outside assistance by demonstrating the commitment of member States to the Programme.

141. The representative of Algeria informed the Sub-committee that his country was participating fully in the activities of AMCEN. He pointed out that 10 institutions and 30 experts had been proposed for activities of the four Committees of the Cairo Programme.

(c) Report on the ratification and accession to international and regional agreements with particular emphasis on conservation of tropical forests and their implementation by member States (E/ECA/CM.15/...)

142. In presenting the document, the representative of the secretariat said that it was based on the deliberations of an ad hoc expert group meeting, held in Addis Ababa from 16 to 20 January 1989, on the situation of the development of environmental legislation in Africa with emphasis on regional and international agreements and conventions. It briefly reviews the situation and suggests some strategies for encouraging and assisting member States in acceding to regional and international conventions on the environment by African countries.

143. Participants discussed the document, particularly the recommendations of the ad hoc expert group meeting presented as an annex to the report. They pointed out that the reasons for not signing most of these conventions and agreements on the environment were more complex than had been pointed out in the report of the meeting. One reason was that many of the conventions were now out of date and some were not particularly relevant to the region. The other reason mentioned to the financial implications of their implementation and not only a problem of awareness of these agreements or the related environmental problems. On the other hand, it was pointed out, a number of conventions relevant to Africa had not been mentioned in the report. It was pointed out that, for a full coverage of the subject area, the next exercise should be carried out in consultation with UNEP, UNESCO and OAU.

144. The recommendations of the ad hoc expert group meeting were reviewed and adopted, namely that:

(a) A comprehensive study be carried out, by ECA, on the state of environmental legislation in a selected number of member States, with specific emphasis on the problems of acceding to regional and international agreements and conventions, with the view to developing guidelines on the incorporation

of environmental clauses into treaties for regional co-operation and accession to international agreements and conventions on the environment;

(b) Periodic seminars for environmental lawyers be held to review different aspects of the development of regional and international agreements and conventions on the environment and their implementation in Africa;

(c) Seeing that environmental problems vary with time and the level of the sophistication in technological advances, an expert group meeting be held in 1991-1992 to review the status of environmental legislation in Africa with specific emphasis on the problems of accession to and application of regional and international agreements and conventions on the environment with the view to making recommendations to member States.

(d) Report on the progress in the establishment of the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) (E/ECA/ENV/58)

145. In presenting the document, the representative of the secretariat pointed out that by its resolution 651 (XXIII) of 18 April 1988 on Resources for the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), the ECA Conference of Ministers requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission, in close collaboration with the Secretary-General of WMO, to continue to carry out all the necessary activities to make the newly established Centre operational.

146. The representative of UNEP pointed out that his organization had been involved in the preparatory work for the establishment of the Centre and stated that the functions of the AMCEN Climatology Network will be taken over by ACMAD when it became operational. A memorandum of understanding for this purpose had been concluded with WMO.

147. Participants reviewed the status of the implementation of ACMAD and noted with satisfaction the collaboration of the secretariats of ECA and WMO with the Government of Niger and other agencies of the United Nations system such as FAO, UNEP and UNESCO. With the assistance of UNDP, they had taken the necessary measures to work out strategies for mobilizing resources for the Centre. It was noted that the ECA Conference of Ministers had decided that all member States should contribute to the recurrent budget of the Centre annually the amount of $US 1 million. The Sub-committee also noted that very few countries had ratified the constitution of ACMAD and urged them to do so. The ratification of the constitution was particularly important because it would demonstrate to the donor community the commitment of member States to the institution. It was therefore pertinent that those member States that were not in a position to immediately proceed with an early ratification, but firmly intend to do so as soon as possible, might wish to consider alternative steps to re-affirm their commitment to the Centre.

(e) Report on the implementation of the 1988-1989 environment in Africa work programme and proposals for the 1990-1991 biennium (E/ECA/ENV/59)

148. In presenting the document, the representative of the secretariat drew the attention of the participants to the fact that member States are supposed to participate in developing the programme activities of the environment programme so that its outputs could best respond to their needs. This was

why one of their responsibilities was to carry out the review of the activities of the programme and proposed programme activities. It was further pointed out that the activities of the programme will be carried out in consultation with all the agencies and institutions working on environmental matters in Africa.

149. After reviewing the activities so far undertaken by the environment programme, participants endorsed the proposals for 1990-1991 as shown below:

Programme activity 1: Development of environmental capabilities, including the development of manpower capabilities

Final outputs

(i) Report to the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment on progress with the preparation of plans of action to combat desertification (first quarter, 1991).

(ii) Technical publication: Techniques of desertification control in selected African countries (fourth quarter, 1991).

(iii) Two technical support missions to training courses of ECA-sponsored subregional and regional intergovernmental institutions on the environmental aspects of development issues in Africa (one in 1990; one in 1991).

150. The secretariat will continue to mobilize extrabudgetary resources for the substantive and technical support to the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development, including participation in technical programme development, servicing of the meetings of its Board of Governors, preparation of project documents, resource identification and the preparation of progress reports.

Programme activity 2: Environmental assessment and management relating to the impact of the development and utilization of natural resources and pollution control

Final outputs

(i) Report to the ECA Conference of Ministers on the status of the dumping, in Africa, of hazardous industrial wastes and the movement of major potentially toxic materials (first quarter 1991).

(ii) Substantive servicing of an ad hoc expert group meeting to examine guidelines for monitoring the movement of hazardous industrial wastes and potentially toxic materials in Africa (third quarter, 1991).

(iii) Progress report to the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment on the implementation of the recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development (first quarter, 1991).

(iv) Technical publication: Directory of African Environmental Experts and List of Institutions on Environmental Matters in Africa: Second edition (second quarter 1990).

Programme activity 3: Promotion of environmental awareness

Final outputs

(i) Substantive servicing of the sixth meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment (first quarter 1991).

(ii) Technical publications: Six issues of ECA Environment Newsletter (1990, 1991)

151. The representative of the ECA Statistics Division informed participants about ongoing and planned activities in the field of environment statistics. She emphasized that the recently started programme aimed at promoting environment statistics in member States as an element of regular statistical activities. Technical advisory services, undertaken to countries upon request, were thus an important element of the programme. She further underlined the necessity of establishing rapidly reliable data bases on high priority environmental topics at the national, subregional and regional levels and presented examples for a minimum programme on environment statistics to be achieved by 1992.

152. The following activities and outputs were planned to be carried out with regular budget funds during the 1990-1991 biennium:

(a) Sales publication: African Compendium on Environment Statistics (first quarter 1990);

(b) Ad hoc technical information service: Printouts/diskettes on environment statistics for government statisticians and planners (one set in the fourth quarter 1990; one in the third quarter 1991);

(c) Technical publication: Guidelines on Environment Statistics in Africa for government statisticians and planners (fourth quarter 1991);

(d) Advisory services: Four advisory services to member States, upon request, for establishing or improving environment statistics in national statistical offices and for data collection (two missions per year during the second quarter 1990 and the third quarter 1991);

(e) Report to the sixth session of the Joint Conference of African Planners, Statisticians and Demographers on the progress made in the field of environment statistics (first quarter 1990);

(f) Report to and servicing of an Ad hoc Expert Group meeting on Provisional Guidelines on Environment Statistics for Africa (first quarter 1991);

(g) Extrabudgetary funds would be needed to carry out a project aimed at assisting 20 member States to set up a comprehensive environment statistics programmes tailored to their national needs. The project comprises:

(i) advisory service missions by a consultant to assist national statistical offices in data base development and the utilization of micro-computer equipment with geographical information system (GIS) capability;

(ii) a workshop on statistics on the man-made environment (bilingual) (second quarter 1990).

(f) Report on the implementation of the recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development (E/ECA/ENV/60).

153. Participants were informed of activities so far undertaken by ECA in collaboration with UNEP in the implementation of the recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) and those of the Secretary-General of the United Nations as contained in resolution 42/187 as well as the UNEP Perspective for the Environment to the year 2000 as adopted by General Assembly resolution 42/186. Particular reference was made to the organization of a regional conference on environment and development in Africa with ministers of the environment, economic planning and of education as well as with leaders of non-governmental organizations and youth organizations.

Plenary session for the presentation of the report of the sub-committees for consideration of recommendations (agenda item 8)

154. The Joint Committee examined the recommendations on human settlements and environment. After extensive discussions and amendments, the Joint Committee adopted the recommendations contained in this report as annexes I and II.

Any other business (agenda item 9)

155. The observer from Switzerland drew the attention of the meeting to the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes, for the purpose of adopting and signing the global convention, which will be held at the invitation of the Government of Switzerland in Basel from 20 to 22 March 1989. The fifth and final session of the group of legal and technical experts will meet from 13 to 17 March in Basel to prepare the conference. Invitations and all necessary documents had been sent to member States to attend these two meetings. So far only 17 African countries had confirmed their participation. To ensure the success of the Basel conference, it would be desirable that as many States as possible should participate in it.

156. The observer from Switzerland added that funds might be available to assist representatives from developing countries to attend. Swtizerland had also contributed financially to mobilize these funds. Governments requiring assistance should get in touch with the Executive Director of UNEP.

Adoption of the report and closure of the meeting (agenda item 10)

157. After examining the draft report paragraph by paragraph, the Joint Committee adopted it with some amendments.

158. During the closing session, the Chairman, Honourable Albert Yangura expressed his gratitude to the Government and to the people of Ethiopia for their hospitality, to his colleagues members of the bureau, to the participants, interpreters and the secretariat for their co-operation and to all those who had contributed to the success of the meeting. He expressed the hope that member States would implement the decisions adopted by the Joint Committee. He then declared the meeting closed.

Annex I

RECOMMENDATION ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

The Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and the Environment,

Considering the importance of the economic role of human settlements in development,

Recognizing that the raising of the standard of living of the rural and urban populations requires adequate regional planning,

Conscious of the problems caused by regional disparities within African countries,

Recommends the following:

(a) More emphasis should be given to rural transformation and an investment programme established to provide infrastructures and services to the rural hinterland;

(b) The integration of the rural economy into overall national economy through opening up the rural areas by means of appropriate transport facilities;

(c) The Executive Secretary of ECA is requested, in co-operation with the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat), to assist member States in their endeavour to eliminate environmental hazards in human settlements;

(d) The Executive Secretary of ECA is requested, in co-operation with the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat), to mobilize resources for the implementation of human settlements programmes and projects in general and infrastructure planning and design in member States;

(e) The Executive Secretary of ECA is requested, in co-operation with the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat), to promote the objectives of the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000, by assisting member States, upon request, in the preparation and implementation of shelter programmes and projects;

(f) Member States which have not already done so should nominate national co-ordinators who will be responsible to provide relevant data on human settlements development issues in their respective countries. The ECA secretariat will in turn be responsible to co-ordinate and monitor human settlements development in the African region;

(g) The Administrator of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is requested, in co-operation with the Executive Secretary of ECA, to expedite the implementation of the regional project on the development and popularization of locally produced building materials in Africa.

Annex II

RECOMMENDATIONS ON ENVIRONMENT

Recommendation 1

The Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment,

Having considered the report on the progress in the development of suitable measures to combat desertification and the impacts of drought in Africa,

Considering the urgent need for a greater understanding of hot tropical deserts in order to strengthen control measures,

Further considering that inadequate attention is so far being paid by member States, either individually or collectively, to this aspect of desertification control activities,

Recommends that:

(a) Member States should develop and/or strengthen their research capabilities in this field of environmental management;

(b) Emphasis be placed on the social and economic consideration of communities in semi-arid and arid lands in relation to desertification control;

(c) Research on the physical and biophysical aspects of desertification control be developed and/or strengthened;

(d) The ECA Conference of Ministers be requested to consider the feasibility of mobilizing assistance to member States in this endeavour.

Recommendation 2

The Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment,

Bearing in mind ECA resolution 651 (XXIII) of 18 April 1988 on the resources for the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development,

Having considered the report on progress in the establishment of the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD),

Further considering the importance of member States demonstrating their continued commitment to the establishment of the Centre,

Conscious of the urgent need to sustain the interest of the donor community in the establishment of the Centre,

Recommends that the Joint Committee bring the matter to the attention of the ECA Conference of Ministers, requesting the Conference to:

(a) Urge member States which have not yet done so to ratify the Constitution of the Centre as soon as possible;

(b) Request those member States which are not, as yet, in a position to ratify the Constitution immediately to consider alternative steps to re-affirm their commitment to the establishment of the Centre;

(c) Urge all member States which have not done so, to pay their contribution to the recurrent budget of the Centre as decided by resolution 651 (XXIII);

(d) Request the Executive Secretary to contact member States concerning their individual contributions to the budget of the Centre.